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Lauderdale Baptists form first ACTS board in state

The first local ACTS board in Mississippi has been formed in Lauderdale Association. Leon Young is director of missions.

The local ACTS board will determine the 23 hours per week local program schedule on the Meridian Television Selection System. They will also form policies of operation for the local ACTS system and guide it in the months and years to come.

The local ACTS board will be working with T.V. Selection System, Inc. arranging for a channel to carry ACTS.

A local church can become a part of the ACTS Satellite Network by attending the ACTS awareness meeting held

in its association, and then it will have a 90-day period in which to determine if it wants to be a part of the local ACTS board. Lauderdale had its ACTS awareness meeting on Aug. 15 (their 90-day period was up on Nov. 15).

The churches from Lauderdale that agreed to become part of the ACTS Satellite Network voted to pay 10 cents per resident member per month once ACTS comes to their community. They also agreed to share in the cost of the TVRO Satellite dish and related equipment. Each church gives to the Cooperative Program. This entitles it to have at least one member on the local ACTS board.

In Meridian, Farrell Blankenship,

director of the Department of Broadcast Services, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, met with the group to help in the forming of the ACTS board.

Those churches which have voted to be a part of the ACTS network affiliate in Lauderdale Association and their board members are Fifteenth Avenue, chairman, Vincent Smith; South Side, Allen Tyner, vice-chairman; Eighth Avenue, Paul Earley; Hickory Grove, Charles Siau; Highland, Ron McGee; First Church of Marion, Jerome Sharp; First Church of Meridian, Randy Scarbrough; Midway, W. B. Webb; Northcrest, Malcolm Lewis; Oak Grove, Leon Adams; Oakland

Heights, Marcus Finch; Pine Springs, Mike Vick; Poplar Springs Drive, Harvey Kelly; State Boulevard, W. F. Evans.

Other associations in the state are invited by Blankenship to contact his office in Jackson to set up an ACTS awareness meeting.

Evangelism directors plan for simultaneous revivals

By Jim Newton

BOSTON (BP)—Calling for a year of prayer and preparation in 1985, Southern Baptist evangelism directors launched plans for simultaneous revivals in 28,000 Southern Baptist churches in 1986.

Theme for the simultaneous meetings, scheduled March 16-April 27, 1986, will be "Good News America: God Loves You."

Plans for the campaign, in which local Southern Baptist churches in a given area hold revival meetings beginning and ending the same day, were outlined in detail during the national conference of Southern Baptist evangelism directors at the Sheraton Boston Hotel.

During the opening address, SBC Home Mission Board Evangelism Vice President Robert Hamblin called for the evangelism directors to make 1985 a year of prayer preceding the simultaneous effort. Hamblin is former pastor of Harrisburg Church in Tupelo.

"If we want to baptize 560,000 people in 1986, then 1985 must become a year of prayer for Southern Baptists," Hamblin said. "If we really pray for revival in 1985, our plans for evangelism will succeed. But it will never happen if we don't pray."

Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, announced he had already scheduled the simultaneous revival in his church, April 6-13, and had enlisted Johnny Jackson, a vocational evangelist from Little Rock, Ark., as his evangelist.

Richard Harris, director of the Home Mission Board's mass

evangelism department, presented each state evangelism director a planning book for the 1986 campaign, describing the effort as "the most far-reaching, life-changing simultaneous evangelistic effort Baptists have ever attempted."

Harris cited statistics indicating that the years when Southern Baptists held simultaneous revivals were the years when the number of SBC baptisms were the highest. Simultaneous revivals were held in 1950, 1951, 1955, 1959, 1964, and 1969, said Harris, and the record number of baptisms, 429,063, was in 1959.

Harris said each state convention would set its own dates for the simultaneous revivals, but most would take place March 16-April 6, or April 6-27, 1986.

Plans call for a mass media campaign before the revivals to make unchurched Americans aware of "Good News America: God Loves You."

Bill Nichols and Eddie Gilstrap of the SBC Radio and Television Commission told the evangelism directors how the ACTS television network would be used during the campaign in an effort to reach 40 million viewers. Estimated cost of the media campaign is \$11 million.

Harry Piland, director of the Sunday School department, and Roy Edgemon, director of the Church Training department, told how the Sunday School Board and Home Mission Board are cooperating in an effort to train one million Sunday school teachers in evangelism.

The two boards have developed an

evangelism training "module" which can be used over and over by SBC churches to train leaders in evangelism during 1986-1990, they said.

Sunday School Board President-elect Lloyd Elder, in another address, said the winning of America to Christ is waiting on the renewal of the denomination to Christ.

"Unless there is a renewal of spirit which permeates the whole denomination, we are not going to win this nation for Christ," Elder said.

Speaking on the conference theme, "Planning for Evangelism," Home Mission Board Planning Vice President Leonard Irwin said some Baptists have the wrong idea long range planning takes the place of the Holy Spirit.

"Planning does not predetermine the future, but it helps us deal with the future when we come to it," Irwin observed.

The conference closed with a plea from Sam Simpson, pastor of Bronx Baptist Church in New York, to mobilize a whole army of Baptist lay people to permeate the world with the gospel. "It can't be done by the professionals," Simpson warned. "It must be done by lay people who rub shoulders every day with the business world."

Neither can Baptists do it alone, said Simpson, president of the New York City Council of Churches. "If you try, you'll make more enemies than you make friends," he asked the evangelism directors to kneel and pray revival and renewal would begin with themselves.

(Newton is Home Mission Board news editor.)

Firewood warms neighborhood hearts

By Tim Nicholas

A couple of cords of firewood for the family of a man in Pontotoc County confined to a wheelchair is one of the "Brotherhood Blessings" from the men of County Line Baptist Church. These men have taken on their end of the county offering to help those not able to help themselves. "Brotherhood Blessings" is the heading of a poster listing their chores. For three years now the men have chopped wood and done general repair work for people in their area, church member or not, black or white. "Half or better" are not church members, says Quay Sprayberry, Brotherhood director.

"The Lord revealed it to us that there were people going cold," said one of the men. Many residents depend on wood fires for all their heating. So Saturdays in the winter, the men, numbering up to 25 at the time, trudge out into the woods (where they have permission to cut) and chop firewood.

The work "helps hold the Brotherhood together, too," says another volunteer. The church has mechanics, carpenters, and electricians who volunteer their time. A full time carpenter, they say, would go broke in their neighborhood, since there is so much volunteerism already.

The men have underpinned a neighbor's trailer, roofed nearby Robbs Baptist Church, built their own pastorium and added six rooms to their education space. And, among

(Continued on page 3)

No issue next week; Merry Christmas!

The next issue of the Baptist Record will be dated Jan. 5, 1984. Postal agreements call for 50 issues to be published each year skipping July 4 and Christmas weeks.

Also, the next issue will be the first in the permanent tabloid format. Favorable reader response prompted the decision to go ahead with the format change. Each issue will have the same amount of space as the full sized paper. It will be half the size, but with double the pages.

The Baptist Record editor and staff take this time to offer readers Christmas greetings with hopes for a time for a peaceful reflection on the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of Christ.

'Concerned' Baptists form non-geographic association

By Tom Miller

LYNCHBURG, Va. (BP) — Ninety-five persons from ten churches met at Lynchburg's Old Forest Road Baptist Church and formed the Concerned Baptist Association of Virginia.

Fifty-seven of those attending were members of Old Forest Road and 29 others are members of Jerico Missionary Chapel, a black mission of Old Forest Road.

There were two representatives each from Worsham and Sycamore Baptist churches, Southside Associa-

tion, and Horeb Baptist church, Natural Bridge Association.

Four churches had one representative each. They are Highland-Lynchburg; Level Green-Norfolk; Shenandoah church, Shenandoah Association; and C. Street, a black independent church in Lynchburg.

Arthur B. Ballard, pastor of Old Forest Road, was elected moderator and Don Gillette, pastor of Timber Ridge, Strawberry Association, was elected treasurer. Gillette apparently was not present since his church was not listed as having a representative at the meeting.

Robert Powers, pastor of Level Green, was elected vice moderator and Ron Hunt of Old Forest Road was elected clerk.

A constitution was adopted and resolutions were adopted opposing abortion, pornography, and ordination of women deacons and ministers. Resolutions passed favoring prayer in public schools, support of the 1983 SBC resolution on nuclear disarmament, and negative designation of funds to selected parts of the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program.

Ballard told the group Old Forest Road "has spent \$15,000 in our effort in the conservative move in the state of Virginia, \$1,800 of this was for the speakers (Paige Patterson of Dallas and Robert Witty of Jacksonville, Fla.) for the last meeting."

The new group plans to publish its own newspaper, the Concerned Baptist Messenger, and seek representation on the Virginia Baptist General Board. They say they will maintain current ties with district associations where they exist and have dual affiliation with the new statewide association.

Speaker for the meeting was Stanley Frye who was pastor of Leedsville Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg Association, when the church voted to withdraw and become independent. He declared he now has resigned and become a Southern Baptist again and is moving to North Carolina where he will be a full-time evangelist.

The next meeting of the association will be Feb. 24, 1984.

Tom Miller is associate editor of the Virginia Religious Herald.)

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Disciplemaking on Campus

Student Day at Christmas 1983

Christian Friends help people with special needs

By Jerry Stevens

Mississippi Baptists in Winston County are participating in an interdenominational ministry to help people with special needs. The Christian Friends Society is an arm of the Ministerial Alliance of Winston County and provides a number of ministries to the county. Jimmy Porter, pastor of First Church, Louisville, is the 1983 president of the organization.

Most visible at this time of year are the toy and foodstuffs projects which are given out during Christmastime. Last year, the need for toys became apparent and a collection was begun. This Christmas, a box of toys will be given to about 200 children of needy families in the county.

Deliveries of the food collected from churches all over the county is made from First Church, Louisville, where the food is collected and sorted. County supervisors make the deliveries. Between 150-175 boxes were to be delivered this week.

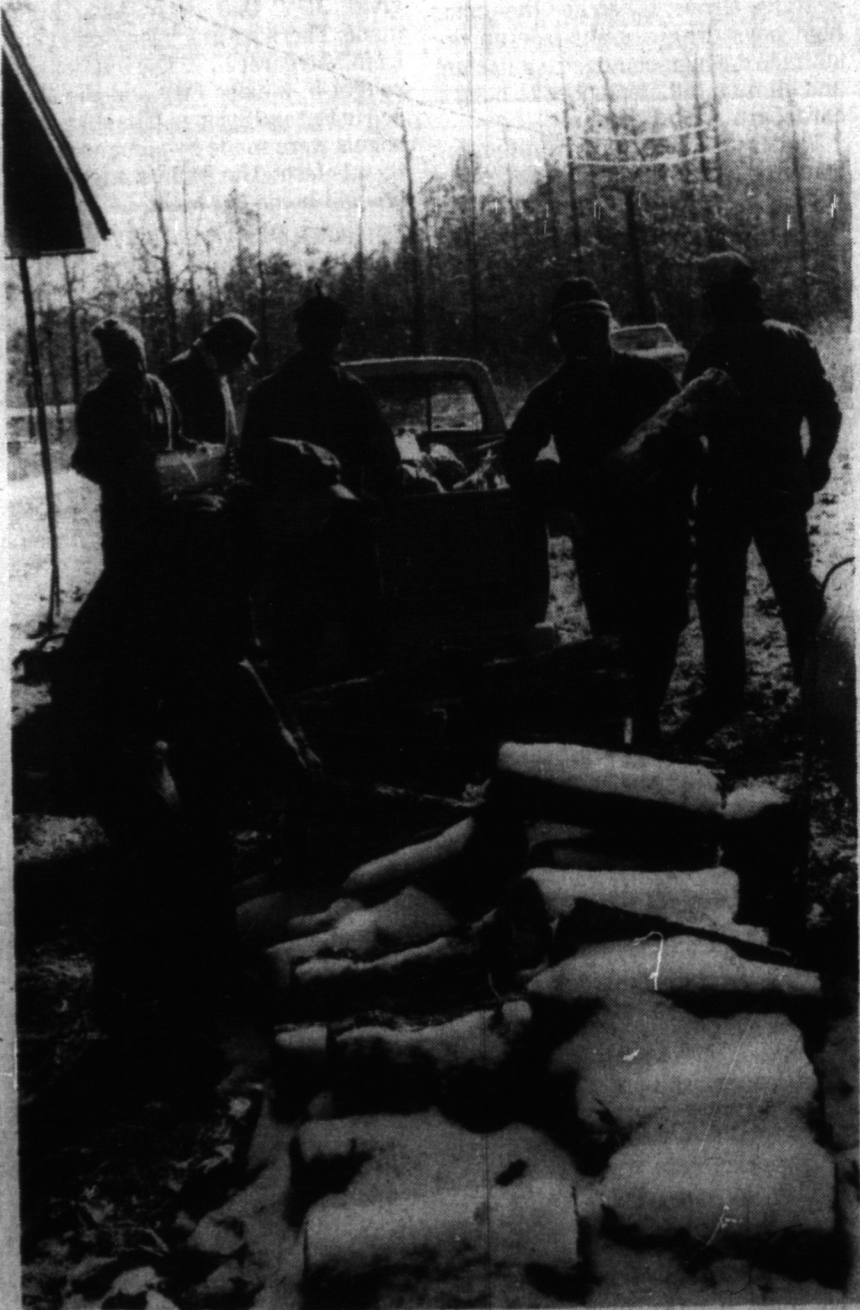
Linda Craft, Society president, said about 100 people are serving as volunteers.

Money to operate the Christian Friends Society comes mainly from the churches. The first Sunday in November the churches are asked to take a special offering for the Society. And the Society has a hamburger stand at the Red Hills Arts Festival in the spring to pay the rent for a building used as a thrift store. The thrift store is open on Friday afternoons, selling clothing, toys, and essentials. When necessary the items needed are made gifts to those in need.

Other ministries of the Society include helping transients with food and lodging, cash for groceries to the needy, goods and services to those burned out, and sometimes, cash for medication.

(Stevens is director of missions for Winston County.)

Volunteers sort canned goods for distribution to the needy in the Winston County area.



The men of County Line Church, Pontotoc County, deliver firewood.

Editorials

The first Christmas carol —
the song of heaven's choir

Someone said recently that the greatest choir ever assembled was the one that gathered in the field outside Bethlehem to help the angel who was there before them tell the shepherds of Christ's birth. The scripture refers to this group as a multitude of the heavenly host.

What was their song? "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

It must have been magnificent. This choir was sent by the Lord himself, so its presentation was far beyond in every way what could have been imagined by finite concepts.

There is no way of imagining the glory and majesty of the moment as this group of beings, obviously super-

natural, made its presentation. And for a group of shepherds, until that point in time probably rather bored with the circumstances of the moment, to be given to understand that this choir came directly from the Lord to sing because of the incarnation of the Lord had to be a moment such as had never been experienced before.

Just moments before the angel, who also had come directly from the Lord, had told the shepherds: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

The Lord of creation, the ruler of the universe, the Creator, had entered into the affairs of men in the form of a baby.

And it was all done by divinely laid plans in order that the sinful nature of man would no longer be a barrier and man could enjoy fellowship with God without paying the only penalty that would suffice for such rebellion—death. That was to be paid by the baby, by God himself, at the proper time.

It was, without doubt, an awesome moment.

This is the event we are celebrating when we observe Christmas. We must be careful to observe it properly. Anything other than a proper observation is a sacrilege. The exchange of gifts between family members and friends is all right. In many cases these gifts are things saved until Christmas that would have been bought anyway at some other time.

We must not let the exchange of gifts between friends and family, however, become the prime object of the observation. This is the sacrilege; and, in the atmosphere of the day, it is difficult to avoid.

This was a great choir—the greatest ever assembled. This year let's join them as we also sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Even so, these will be empty words unless we actively work to bring peace to the earth and promote good will the world around.

The Prince of Peace is the answer, the Christ of Christmas. The heavenly choir made that fact known. We must remember it and base our attitudes and actions on it.

"Our Father (and Mother) who art . . ."

It seems as if someone is always wanting to try to improve on the Bible, and evidently the National Council of Churches is no exception. While it does not claim biblical status for its new lectionary, it does use biblical texts with scripture lessons.

This is fine until the "improvements" are brought into the picture. The National Council's lectionary has taken out all references to gender or has added a female gender to complement the male use that cannot be avoided.

In recounting the creation of man, the lectionary says, "... then God the Sovereign One formed a human creature of dust from the ground, and breathed into the creature's nostrils the breath of life; and the human creature became a living being."

Now that seems a little silly, if not a whole lot so.

I have not been able to find one of those lectionaries in Jackson, so my comments must be made from reading the Newsweek account of the book's introduction. One can't help but wonder, however, how it handled the creation of women if man is to be referred to as simply a human creature. Perhaps Eve was designated as another human creature, but that would seem to leave something lacking.

It is difficult to determine how it could be felt that there is much improvement in all of this. It is one thing, of course, for study to be made of ancient manuscripts in order to see if new light can be shed on the message of the scripture. It is quite another thing to

change the scripture in such a seemingly frivolous manner.

Verses 25 through 27 of Matthew 11 read as follows: "At that time Jesus declared, 'I thank you, (God my Mother and) Father, sovereign of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, God, for such was your gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by (God) my Father (and Mother); and no one knows the Child except God, and no one knows God except the Child and any one to whom the Child chooses to reveal God. . . .'"

There is no mention in Newsweek of what was done to John 3:16.

This lectionary doesn't sound a triumphant note. Its tone is garbled and confusing. In view of all the crit-

cism that has been aimed at the National Council of Churches lately, that organization could have done without this tampering with the scripture. Maybe the scripture doesn't say what sometimes we feel we would like for it to, but it says what it says; and our only choice is to do our best to understand it and take it as it is.

And this is a sort of postscript to the above: for just this week, after the above was written, I received a copy of the new lectionary. For those who might be interested, John 3:16 is rendered thusly: "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Child, that whoever believes in that Child should not perish but have eternal life." In a footnote at the bottom of the page it is noted that the Revised Standard Version uses the word, "Son," instead of "Child."

Guest opinion . . .

A childhood Christmas memory

By Dorothy Shannon

Do you have a childhood Christmas memory? Reminisce with me as I recall my Christmas memory.

When I was a child, the excitement of Christmas had begun by this time of the year. Preparation was fun but certainly could not be compared with the climax of Christmas Day.

Preparation for Christmas began with the talk about how big the tree should be. The decision always ended in the children's favor. A big tree that touched the ceiling was a necessity in our sight.

The air was crisp and smelled of wood smoke from the chimney as we gathered the ax from the wood pile to go in search of a suitable tree. Cheeks became rosy as we walked for miles over the hills and meadows. Cedar trees grew in abundance everywhere and it was very difficult to make a decision as to which one would be best. Finally, just the right one was sighted; and, as the first chopping sound began, the intense aroma of cedar filled our red noses. The tree was cut and left for our daddy to bring home later.

As we returned home from miles of tree hunting, mother would have hot chocolate waiting to warm us. The crackling fire that burned you on one

side and froze you on the other felt particularly good. We eagerly awaited the tree's arrival. Daddy would bring the tree in just as the sun slipped away.

Chores were completed and supper was finished before we could begin to focus on the newly cut tree again. Our daddy would build cross pieces of wood to hold the tree in place as we prepared the decorations. We had only a few "store bought" decorations. The big shiny star was "store bought" and always topped the tree first.

As we placed the star, mother would remind us that it represented the Bethlehem star. I always stood in awe of that big glass star on top of our tree. Next popcorn was strung with care for a chain that crisscrossed around the tree branches. Cookies were placed here and there and candy canes enhanced the sight of the decorations. Small glass ornaments with iridescent colors glittered as we hung them. More fun than all the other decorations were the icicles that were thrown all over the tree. What a sight in my childhood memory.

Another memorable event was the preparation of food. Two weeks before Christmas the cooking would begin. Mother's wood stove undoubtedly turned out the best baked goods in the

country. The smells of the "goodies" are etched in my memory. It would have been a shame to have less than six cakes. Cookies of all sorts, especially tea cakes, my favorite, were prepared.

As the days of Christmas wore on, the preparation of food became more intense. Mother's ambrosia was better than anyone else's. Friends and family came to enjoy the food. What a happy memory returns as I think of the kids who came and ate around the old "lazy Susan" table after the grown-ups had finished.

Then there was Christmas Eve. Already tired from a long day's play, we tried so hard to stay awake for Santa's arrival. I could not understand Santa's coming and going, but I listened intently for his reindeer on the roof or the bells on his sleigh. I wondered, how does he get down the chimney without getting black? I dared not ask. Too many questions about Santa brought promises of switches and cold sweet potatoes; therefore, questions were kept to myself as the sandman sprinkled my eyes with sleep before Santa arrived on Christmas Eve. Memories of these hours of waiting for Santa are treasures.

As Christmas morning arrived the

excitement had reached a crescendo. The feather beds were warm, but we were eager to begin Christmas Day. Our hearts were beating at the pace of a gallop. The morning was cold and frosty. A fire had to be lighted to chase away the chill. We had to wait in bed until the room was warm, which must have taken at least 10 hours!

Finally, when we could stand it no longer, we were allowed to see the wonder of Christmas all at once. What a beautiful scene! The Christmas tree with the glitter of the glass star and the sparkle of icicles was breathtaking. There were gifts for everyone. A bright red tricycle for me was best of all.

When the excitement of toys and games wore down to a hum, mother and daddy would recall to us the story of the Savior's birth and how the Wise Men brought gifts to baby Jesus for his birthday. In my childhood memory I can recall wondering why I could not give him a gift, not realizing that all he wanted was me.

Little did I realize what a beautiful gift my mother and father gave me—a beautiful childhood Christmas memory. I hope your memory is as pleasant as mine.

Dorothy Shannon lives at Shannon, Miss.

Letters to the Editor

Battle for lives

Editor:
Thanks for your Oct. 29 editorial, "A Battle for Lives." Despite improved longevity for the entire population, the death rate for 16-24 year olds has been increasing. The primary cause is alcohol-related automobile accidents.

Your efforts to heighten public awareness of the drunk driving problem is greatly appreciated by our or-

ganization. MADD's goal is to reduce deaths and injuries caused by drunk drivers and when drinking and driving is no longer socially acceptable, we will begin to make progress.

Glenda Penton, President
MADD, Pearl River County Chapter
P.O. Box 332
Poplarville, MS 39470

Editor:

Thank you for the splendid editorial a few weeks back about the deadly curse of alcohol. There is not one positive thing that can be said in defense of the legalization of alcohol. It has destroyed more homes and lives than any other one thing in this world.

Not too long ago I had to bury one of the sweetest ladies I have ever known. In every way she was a real glowing light for our Lord Jesus. That light was snuffed out in a twinkling of an eye when the automobile in which she was a passenger was hit from the rear by a drunk driver driving at a high rate of speed. This dear, sweet, Christian lady was killed instantly.

As I stood by her casket and watched her family file by for one last goodbye I had an inner thought. If these folks who vote for the legalization of alcohol could only stand in one of these lonely funeral home parlors and see the great grief that is present, all because of alcohol, then perhaps the vote for legalization of this garbage would never find a sympathetic ear. It is evident that those who sell and those who buy as well as those who vote for it have not stood yet in one of these funeral parlors.

The driver who was driving the truck

that killed this lady was fined a modest sum for DUI and then released.

The real tragedy of this story is that it occurs every day many times over in the world in which we live. Thus, we must all rise up and vote against the legalization of alcohol of any type. The man who killed our friend was intoxicated from drinking beer. Those who love life and have a respect for it must go to the polls and vote against the legalization of alcohol.

Don G. Nerren, pastor
Center Hill Baptist Church
Monroe County

Trends in the convention

Editor:

According to the Mississippi Baptist Convention Bulletin 1983, page 80, there are 1,922 churches in Mississippi with less than 1,000 members and 99 churches with 1,000 or more members. A look at the program for the 1983 Mississippi Baptist Convention reveals that personalities from 32 of these churches either spoke, sang, gave a testimony, or reported on some issue during the convention sessions. Fifteen of these came from churches with less than 1,000 members while the remaining 17 came from churches with 1,000 or more in membership. Over 50 percent of the convention program personalities came from large churches which represent less than 10 percent of all the churches in our state convention.

The Convention Bulletin on page 80 also states that 66.5 percent of Mississippi Baptist Churches have a mem-

bership under 300. On the convention program only two persons came from churches this small.

Is our convention catering only to the "big boys" and budding up to the large churches with bulging budgets? I personally do not believe this is true, but so as to keep down undue criticism as well as to keep an even program, I call upon our convention officers, denominational leadership, and order of business committee to "spread out" these responsibilities and opportunities to messengers of churches which numerically best represent the majority of our convention.

Ralph Culp, Pastor
Central Baptist Church
Golden, Ms.

Cooperation at Kittiwake

Editor:

Our small mission church has been impressed with the amount of help we have received from the state, association and the sponsoring church. It really has been a year of the Cooperative Program for us.

Kittiwake Baptist Church broke ground for its first building September 18 on two acres of the old Camp Kittiwake property. Pass Christian is a growing community known for our Baptist Assembly, Gulfshore. This new mission work was started in January 1981 with only 12 members and a part-time pastor finishing his seminary education. No land, no building and starting in a resort area where most residents are either Catholic or Episcopalian, the new mission church

knew it would be a difficult task.

But we didn't have to bear the burden alone; there was help and plenty of it. With the help of state missions, associational concern, and one local church's support, we rented a building and set up regular worship services. The Kittiwake property is in a residential area, which means the new church will be the only church in Pass Christian not located downtown.

The sponsoring church, FBC, Long Beach, has helped financially, enabling the pastor to be on the field full time. Both the state Baptist convention and the Gulf Coast Association have helped in the purchase of property and with supplemental salary to the pastor. This first building will be a \$90,000 project. To us it was more than breaking ground for our first building. It was proof that cooperation works in furthering God's work here in Mississippi and around the world.

Michael Hutchinson, pastor
Kittiwake Baptist Church
Pass Christian, Miss.

Most Christians tend to worship their work, to work at their play, and to play with their worship.—Gordon Dahl.

Jubilant Chorus



Faces And Places

by anne washburn mc williams

"O Christmas tree . . ."

At "The End of the Road"—that's Billie and Lavell Tullos' terrific country place down past Hermanville—we stood in a circle with a lot of kinkfolks on Thanksgiving Day and sang "Count Your Many Blessings." It was too early then to cut a Christmas tree.

Then Mama and Betty and Luann and Bubba and Karen and Tommy and W. D. and I sat down the second day of Thanksgiving and started listing, "What I Want for Christmas." Probably Christmas trees were on sale at the Metro that day, but we didn't check.

Saturday night, Dec. 3, W. D. and I exchanged gifts around a Christmas tree, with members of the Hinds County Hunting and Fishing Club at Lake Harbor. All afternoon, rain poured. By 4:30, darkness had shut out daylight. About that time, as we turned off the Natchez Trace, and were driving along Highway 43, the Creator punched a little hole in the cloud-blackened sky. Then gradually in the west a pale glowing, mist-masked sun appeared at the horizon over the reservoir. And over in the east arched a full rainbow. All the heavens, and the waters below, were suddenly shot through with threads of pink and yellow. I caught my breath and cried, "W.D.! look, look! It's better than any pot of gold!"

The next week we searched for a Christmas tree at the grocery store parking lot. I've never liked artificial trees. I want one I can smell, like cedar or spruce. Nothing was under \$18, though. "That's too high," W. D. said, "We'll go to see Speedy at Magee next weekend and look for one in his woods." (Speedy is his brother.)

The first Christmas tree I can remember was a cedar Daddy sawed. Mama trimmed it with red and green paper roping and red paper bells that could be folded shut.

Then when I was in grammar school at Ridge Grove, I watched the junior high boys drag a giant tree up the stairs to the high-ceilinged auditorium and climb a tall stepladder to hang a cardboard star at the top.

The tree in Woman's Building at Southwestern Seminary reached its peak of beauty when every hall had met its Lottie Moon goal and the last light could be turned on.

On North Hines Street, once we had a funny little crooked Christmas tree at our house. I picked it because I didn't want to leave it all forlorn, unchosen. When the Baptist Building employees gathered at the Robert E.

Lee Hotel long ago for a Christmas party, the group at each table presented a custom from some country. My table represented Germany; we lighted little white candles on a miniature tree.

Last Friday night Rosa Hooper and I took a look at the trees in the Governor's Mansion. By 5:30 the scattered flakes of snow had gone, but we braved an icy rain on Capitol Street. The warmth of the parlor felt good. First Lady Elise Winter stood at the doorway shaking hands with a steady stream of guests who had come to open house. Behind her a tall tree was decorated with red velvet bows and ecru lace fans. Upstairs in the hall, another tree was surrounded with antique toys. In the dining room we drank hot spiced tea.

Last week we went to Speedy's house. His wife, Evelyn, said, "I don't think we have any cedars, but you can look if you wish." Speedy drove us down the lane in his pick-up, and Evelyn was right. No suitable cedars. But W. D. pulled a pine down and Speedy sawed the top out. Back home, W. D. set it up; it was bigger than we had thought, but nicely shaped.

"Pine limbs don't grow close enough together," I complained. "Look at that big gap!" But I stuck a sprig of holly in the biggest space. "These needles are slippery! All the ornaments keep sliding off!"

Lots of people have beautiful trees—perfect in symmetry. Every year I think I'll choose a theme for decorating mine, and have one of those pretty trees like I see in magazines. But when I get my ornaments out, I can't seem to leave one off. Each one is loved, because each represents a cherished memory or a person I love, who gave it to me. There's the little ceramic mouse, for example, that Evelyn Keyes made, and the stained glass 'JOY' that Betty Anne Bailey made. There's a fancy long-tailed bird from Margaret Fry. The felt donkey I bought in Mexico City and the shuck doll in Eureka Springs. The silky tassels angels were made by some women in Bangladesh. The lighted angel W. D. brought home one night.

It isn't a classy tree, but it's a pretty tree, after all, in its simplicity. It reminds me that Jesus came to simple surroundings, to a simple bed in a manger. And because it is decorated with love it reminds me of Christmas' deepest meaning—we love each other because he first loved us.

Book Reviews

THE LIVING FAMILY, Lessons on Togetherness from The Living Bible by Ruth Rambo (Fleming H. Revell, 127 pp., \$9.95) The author has compiled family-related passages from the Living Bible which outline God's pattern for family life. She has combined these with a varied collection of statements about the Christian family, on such topics as love, gentleness, traditions, spiritual training, family loyalty and togetherness. The volume is beautifully bound and is illustrated with photographs. Thus it makes a special gift item.—AWM

Students pictured

The students pictured in the Student Day at Christmas poster on page one are Mississippians. Studying is Alan Berry of Delta State University. With guitar is Ricky Young of Mississippi College, Mississippi Baptist Student Union president. And in the Bible study group is Jana Newton, also of Mississippi College.

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The Baptist Building

Box 530, Jackson, Miss. 39205

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"I wonder if God's not trying to speak to us"

A number of Mississippi Baptist associations have ventured into Christian Social Ministries at least on a part time basis with a staffer assigned to the work. These include Hinds Madison, Lauderdale, Jackson and Gulf Coast.

However, several associations have CSM work going on with no additional staffing. Two of these have recently opened crisis centers to house their ministry operations, Simpson and Riverside Associations. And Pike County is operating its crisis ministry out of the associational offices.

The Riverside and Tallahatchie Associational offices were moved in late August from Lyon to downtown

Clarksdale where Jerry Gray is director. It is called the Ministry Center, which Gray calls "a description of the building and the ministry we are trying to perform."

It was a move from a 14 x 25 foot building to one in the center of traffic in the county with over 3,000 square feet of space for only \$275 per month.

The base ministry is clothing collected from all sources. None of the other helping agencies in the county, says Gray, has adequate clothing supplies. Women from the churches examine, repair and size them.

"We provide also a spiritual witness—try to find out their spiritual condition and try to let them know we

By Tim Nicholas

are here because of our love for Christ," says Gray.

One example tells Gray of the value of the ministry. The center helped a family with a fire loss to find a place to live, helped with furniture, and as a result the family members were in church the following Sunday, with several making professions of faith shortly after.

Gray, a Continuing Witness Training equipper, with several of his trainees had delivered a refrigerator to the family and helped in leading the family members to the Lord. "I think it was a genuine conversion," said Gray.

Women's Missionary Union groups pack personal hygiene kits and snacks for those who walk in. Mrs. Carolyn Pellum, mission action leader for the associational WMU, says the women will be volunteering to interview recipients and serve as receptionists for the ministry. Mrs. Dorothy Wilson, associational WMU director, says the center "gives us an opportunity to carry out missions right here." She adds, "we can get more of a sense of missions if we can apply it at home."

Men in the association are expected to do repairs on appliances and furniture donated to the center.

The Simpson Memorial Crisis Center, named so because of donations given to the center as memorials to loved ones, expanded its operations this year. On Highway 49 in Simpson County, Glen Schilling directs the center which is 36 x 75 feet. The old one was 14 x 30 and now is a concession stand for the association's ball field.

The first few weeks this fall, the center was helping 30 people a week, expecting a rise in customers as the cold weather hits harder. Food, clothing, and furniture are the immediate needs served by the center. Each recipient must come with a letter of referral from either a pastor, from the welfare or fire department, the jail, or halfway house. Inmates needing clothing before release are outfitted. Race and denomination are not barriers to the ministries here or in Pike or Clarksdale.

Schilling says that as people feel free to come help at the center, "you're going to have mission-minded people all over the county." All 43 associational churches are participating formally this year.

Each recipient is referred to a church when members come for help. One woman whose house had burned, commended to Schilling that "I wonder if God's not trying to speak to us." Schilling says she promised to get back into church life.

As with Clarksdale and Simpson, the special ministries are not budgeted items. "Everything related is volunteer," says Glen Williams, director of missions. "If budgeted, people would feel everything is being taken care of."

In Pike County, says Williams, the Salvation Army takes care of transients and Pike Baptists concentrate on residents. They focus on people in temporary need. "We've had cases where a poor family was able to live off of welfare, but where a death in the family suddenly brought in 25-30 others to feed." These people needed temporary help.

One woman who with her teenaged son moved to Pike from up north was conned out of her money by scheming relatives. She couldn't find work. Williams asked her if it was worse in Pike or back home. She admitted the situation was more bearable back home and the association financed bus tickets back north for the woman and her son.

The ministry helps five or six families a day, five days a week. Referral is not required, but Williams and volunteers do what checking they can. All incoming families are referred to local churches.

"We've seen a number of people become active in churches, even making professions of faith," says Williams.

The Home Mission Board gave \$2,000 in hunger relief funds to the ministry and when Baptists in the county heard about it, "world hunger gifts started increasing here," says Williams.

Those who sit and think, mostly sit.

Firewood warms hearts

(Continued from page 1)

other deeds, they ran a wire from the pulpit across the street to a speaker in the home of a member who has arthritis and can't get out.

This year, the men and women are delivering fruit baskets to the elderly for Christmas.

And they credit the Baptist Young Women with carrying their part of the helping load, such as carrying food to the sick in the area.

Said Sprayberry, "Our Brotherhood boils down to everybody contributing what talent they have."

Sam Holcomb, pastor, was picking up a group of children from the Baptist Children's Village to stay in the area during Christmas this past Saturday when the story was gathered. Sprayberry said Holcomb and the men had talked it over before allowing their story to be told. "We're not in it for any credit," said several of the men. "Give God the credit," they said.

Moak leads trustees for Baptist Hospital

Mississippi Baptist Medical Center's board of trustees will be guided in 1984 by Paul G. Moak, president, and Zach T. Hederman, chairman of the executive committee.

The 15-member Board, elected annually by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, has its first female member in 30 years in Mrs. Charles (Joan) Tyler.

Other members include Julian L. Clark, Sidney D. Davis, Joel Haire, D. Lynn Harkness, W. Henry Holman, Jr., Tom Hudson, Alvis T. Hunt, W. P. McMullan Jr., Richard L. Miller, Bob W. Pittman, Ralph Rives and Allen O. Webb.

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Mississippi decorations

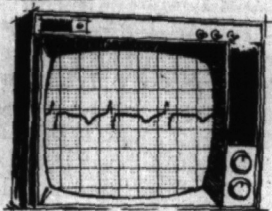
Bill Ireland, a first-year Ph.D. student from Greenville, helped Mrs. June Honeycutt hang ornaments representing Mississippi Baptists on the community Christmas tree at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Ireland, a Mississippi College graduate, is a former campus minister for Mobile College. At the invitation of Mrs. June Honeycutt, wife of seminary president Roy L. Honeycutt, ornaments were contributed by the "first ladies" of Southern Baptist Convention boards and agencies, Baptist state conventions, colleges and universities, seminaries, and Southern Seminary trustees and alumni. Ornaments, many of them handmade, also were sent from more than 40 nations where Southern Baptist foreign missionaries serve. Special Mississippi ornaments were sent by the wives of the following: William H. Ferrell, Southern Seminary alumni president for the state; Jack Glaze, professor and chairman of the division of religion at Mississippi College; David Grant, a seminary trustee; Earl Kelly, state convention executive secretary-treasurer; Levon Moore, a seminary trustee; Lewis Nobles, president of Mississippi College; Ralph Noonkester, president of William Carey College; and Howard Spell, a former seminary trustee. (Photo by Richard Shock)

Mississippi Baptist Activities

Dec. 29-30 Youth Evangelism Conference; Mississippi College, Clinton, 1 p.m.

Jan. 1 Day of Prayer for Year of Cooperative Program (Stew. Emphasis)

1-8 Deacon Emphasis Week (CAPM Emphasis)



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Dear N. T.: We believe the Bible teaches that Christians should tithe their income and have always prac-

ticed store house (church) tithing. Sometimes the church budget figures do not reflect our idea of priorities; but we have always supported the budget, trusting in the wisdom of the church body. On a limited income, we have felt constrained to make over and above offerings to special mission concerns and to community benevolent causes.

Suggestion: If you can't get a family agreement to tithe, try for some percent of the family income and learn the joy of such giving. As for over and above gifts, counsel with the family in advance about special appeals you want to consider. Note the amounts and stick to your plan unless you have some unexpected income. You may feel the need to have a family prayer meeting for leadership in the stewardship of this extra blessing. Giving should be considered a joy and privilege and not a burden or duty. It is one way to express our gratitude to God for His many blessings.

Inquiries to Intensive Care are welcomed. Readers who feel the need of being in touch with Intensive Care are encouraged to write. Identities remain confidential. And though the identities of those performing this ministry have been kept confidential to this point, they are well qualified for the service they are rendering. Inquiries should be addressed to Intensive Care, Baptist Record, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.—Editor.

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Foundation records reflect income increase for ninth straight year

By Harold Kitchings

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation Board of Trustees met at the Baptist Building in Jackson, Dec. 8, to elect officers and to review the 1983 ministry of the Foundation, the 40th anniversary of the agency.

Officers elected for 1984 are: Bill R. Baker, president; Norris L. Stampley, vice president; Paul V. Breazeale, treasurer; A. L. Boone, chairman, executive committee; John N. Dowdle, executive committee (advisory); Charles E. Lofton, executive committee; J. Kearney Travis, Jr., executive committee.

Other trustees are James M. Fleming and Harvey B. Ray. The executive secretary, Harold Kitchings, also served as secretary for trustees.

The audit figures for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1983, reveal the total corpus of funds administered by the

Mississippi Baptist Foundation was \$7,951,699.56, an increase of \$388,376 over the previous year. The record reflects an increase for the ninth consecutive year in both the percentage of yield and the earned income in dollars.

Despite the economic trend downward, the rate of yield increased to 10.14% and the number of dollars earned rose to \$755,457 an increase of \$46,180 over the previous year. This amount exceeds the total convention budget receipts in the year 1948-49 by \$18,000.

Over these 40 years, the convention has invested \$1,334,645.29 in the operation of this ministry. The return in earnings amounts to \$7,033,326.91.

Thus, for every dollar invested, there has been a return of approximately \$5.27 for Mississippi Baptist and Southern Baptist causes.

For the last decade, the investment was \$761,341 and the return was \$4,653,514, thus making the ratio of 1 to 6.11 for each dollar invested.

During the same 40 year time span, our colleges have received earnings and/or gifts from the Mississippi Baptist Foundation in these amounts:

Blue Mountain College	\$1,339,581.01
William Carey College	760,946.84
Clarke College	249,406.24
Mississippi College	466,995.39

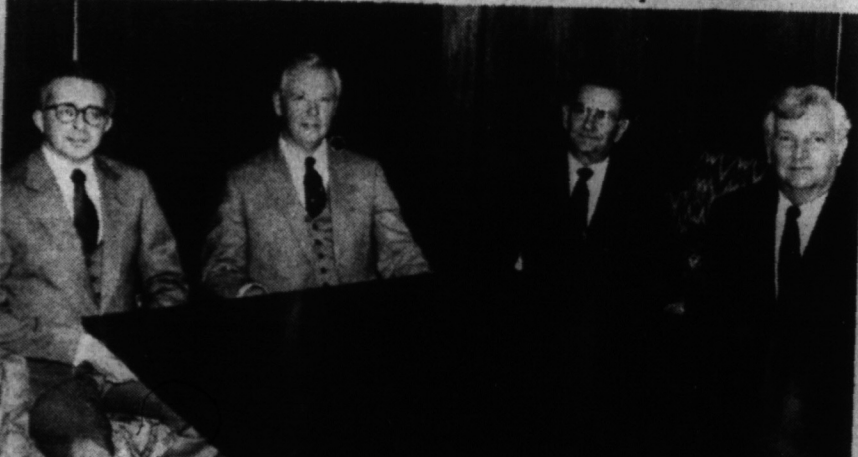
\$3,316,929.48

About \$750,000 has been sent directly to our foreign, home, and state mission boards, and another \$237,000 to the Baptist Children's Village, with the Mississippi Baptist Medical Center receiving \$11,600. At least another \$1,600,000 was earned and sent to our participating churches for these same mission causes.

Our other participants are those who receive the earned income from their funds during the remainder of their lifetime. At their decease, the earnings will go to their designated mission cause or causes. Some \$648,000 has been earned and distributed to these individuals.

It was noted that because of the wise investment practices of the executive committee, the corpus of the Participants' Funds has been increased by one-third (33 1/3 percent) during the life of the Foundation.

The meeting was concluded with a celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation. Barry Landrum, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pasadena, Texas, and a former Trustee of the Foundation, was the special speaker.



The new officers of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation are shown in the photo above. Left to right, they are Paul Breazeale, treasurer; Bill Baker, president; Norris Stampley, vice-president; and Harold Kitchings, secretary. These are the elected officers of the Foundation. Kitchings is also an employee of the Foundation and serves as executive secretary.

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youth evangelism conference



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Registration at 1:00 on Thursday
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Baylor Faculty, students urge nuclear disarmament

WACO, Texas (BP)—Fifty-eight members of the graduate religion 'community' at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, have publicly urged fellow Christians, "not to be accomplices to the final holocaust through our silence."

The group, including 43 of 61 resident students in the Baylor graduate religion program, 14 faculty members and retired faculty member, placed a paid advertisement in the December issue of an independent, national newspaper, SBC Today.

Headlined, "An end to our silence," the statement said the signers "believe the use of nuclear weapons lacks moral justification and stands contrary to the will of God," and asked others to "join us in the divine calling to be makers of peace through prayer and service."

The administration at Baylor, the largest university affiliated with Southern Baptists, "has not been extremely favorable toward our efforts," according to Curtis Freeman, one of the statement's authors and pastor of Belfalls (Texas) Baptist Church.

However, John S. Belew, vice president and provost at Baylor, said: "The right of individuals to express their positions on issues which affect the welfare of mankind are respected at Baylor. All sensitive people are deeply concerned about the potential for a nuclear holocaust."

"It would be improper, though, for any group to state or infer they represent a position of Baylor University. A number of solutions for the avoidance of nuclear disaster have been proposed and it is the hope of all mankind that the most effective one will be embraced."

Freeman said they hope the ad, which included a disclaimer "this statement in no way represents any official position of Baylor University on this subject," will bring the issue of disarmament up for discussion among Southern Baptists.

Students, "spontaneous" with professors, "explaining our concern, going over the statement, asking and answering questions," Freeman said after it was decided to include as large a portion of the graduate religion community as possible.

Thirteen of 17 full time faculty members in the graduate school ultimately signed, along with the director of Baylor's Institute of Church-State Studies, James Wood.

Others included Glen Hilburn, department, chairman; James Landes, former executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; Daniel B. McGee; H. J. Flanders Jr.; C. W. Christian; John B. Davidson;

Russell Lester, John Wood, Naymond H. Keathley, William L. Pitts, J. W. Ousley, Bob E. Patterson, Bruce C. Cresson, and Glen O. Hilburn. E. L. Dwyer, retired faculty member, also signed the statement.

Those who did not sign were: James Breckenridge, Edward Dalglish, Robert Sloan and W. J. Wimpy, campus chaplain.

The statement also said: "The nuclear arms race threatens to terminate creation, while simultaneously diverting money and resources which could otherwise be used to meet the basic needs of the earth's poorest people... the spiraling nuclear build-up accompanied by the failure to develop a meaningful, authentic nuclear arms control and disarmament negotiation strategy demands that the Church withdraw its moral support from the continuing direction of the nuclear arms race."

It said the statement had been written to "affirm the spirit of recent statements on nuclear arms control and disarmament, as exemplified by the Southern Baptist Convention's peace resolutions, the Roman Catholic Bishops' letter and the Presbyterian Church's Call to Halt Nuclear Arms."

Freeman said, in addition to Southern Baptists, signers of the statement included members of Missionary Baptist, Presbyterian, Mennonite, Disciples of Christ, Church of Christ, Lutheran and Nazarene churches.



Front row from left: Regina Harlow, Clifffa Foster, Delena Nunn, Rhonda Latch. Back row: Susan Puckett, Melva Graham, Greg Moffitt, Bruce Ingram, Mark Frederick, Suzy Washburn.

BMC students work in Bogota

During the upcoming Christmas holidays, a team of nine students and the Baptist Student Union director will participate in a mission project in Bogota, Colombia in South America.

Working with Blue Mountain alumna ('82) and missionary journeyman, Miss Pam Randle, the students will work primarily with English-speaking young people. During the 11 day project (Dec. 27-Jan. 6), the team's major responsibility will be to lead a four-day recreation lab with approximately 75 high school students. Other experiences will include an overnight "lock-in" with youths and leading worship services at the English-speaking Baptist Chapel. Members of the team are Mark Frederick, Amory, Clifffa Foster,

Shepherdsville, Ky.; Melva Graham, Coldwater; Regina Harlow, Amory; Bruce Ingram, Pinson, Ala.; Rhonda Latch, Hornsby, Tenn.; Greg Moffitt, Hickory Flat; Delena Nunn, Hernando; Suzy Washburn, Blue Mountain; and Susan Puckett, BSU director. Also working in the group will be Lloyd Luncford, associate director of the Department of Student Work, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

The team is already involved in weekly training sessions. The pastor of the English-speaking Baptist Chapel in Bogota, Bob Polk was on campus on Oct. 28 to spend time in orientation with the team. Each student on the team is responsible for raising \$700 for the trip.



Church goes up at old Kittiwake

Kittiwake Church, Pass Christian, broke ground for its first building Sept. 18, on two acres of the old Camp Kittiwake property. The mission, sponsored by First Church, Long Beach, was started in January 1981 with 12 members. The building is a \$90,000 project. Left to right are Bobby Perry, Gulf Coast director of missions; Bill Hinkle, Building Committee; Len Denson, chairman, Building Committee; Al Green, Building Committee; Lois Hicks, Building Committee; Michael Hutchinson, pastor. (See "Letters to the Editor.")

College at Charleston removes administrators

By John Roberts

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)—John A. Hamrick, president of Baptist College at Charleston for the past 19 years, has retired and three other top administrators have been dismissed by the school's trustees.

The moves came during the meeting of the college trustees Oct. 25 when the board asked Hamrick to announce his retirement "within the next 10 days, to be effective by Jan. 1, 1984."

He agreed and asked to be relieved of administrative duties effective Nov. 1. He will remain in office until Dec. 31. Hamrick, 68, has been president since the school was founded in 1964. He has led in its growth to 2,000 students and a dozen buildings.

Baptist College is one of four colleges of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

The president's sudden retirement was brought about by a conflict with the board over financial policies and over his choice of key administrative assistants. Some of the trustees said they were not interested in removing the president, but two vice presidents. Since Hamrick refused to fire them, the board could best reach them by

asking the president to retire, the trustees said.

Minutes after voting for the president's retirement, the board voted to dismiss E. Harold Keown, vice president for development, Charles L. Price, vice president for student affairs, and E. Harold Keown Jr., assistant vice president for student affairs. Their dismissal was effective immediately and they were given one month's severance pay.

Both votes were unanimous.

The board's expressed concern was over what they considered too heavy indebtedness for building. The college has an operating budget of \$10 million but has \$11 million in debts—mostly federal loans for buildings. Although Baptist College's assets exceed \$24.2 million, it reported a total endowment of only \$643,457.

John A. Fincher, retired president of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and former academic dean of Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., has been named interim administrator.

(Roberts is editor of the South Carolina Baptist Courier.)

Keyboard fests are set for 15 locations

District keyboard festivals for piano and organ are set for Jan. 26, 27, and 28 in 15 locations throughout the state.

These festivals are for students in grades 1-12. There will be a registration fee of \$6 per participant which is to be sent to the Church Music Department, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Box 530, Jackson, Miss., 39205. Registration forms may be obtained from the above address, also.

Registration must be received by Tuesday, Jan. 10, according to Dot Pray, coordinator of the festivals.

Following are dates, times, locations, and leaders for each festival.

Jan. 26 at 6:30 p.m.: East McComb Church, McComb, James Bickham; Morrison Heights, Clinton, Bill Barnes; First, Laurel, Billy Vaughan; First, West Point, Bob Gray; Calvary, Tupelo, Sandy Cotonmanous;

Jan. 27 at 6:30 p.m.: First, Columbus, James Allen; First Natchez, Ken Miller; Petal-Harvey, Petal, Louis Nicolosi; North Greenwood, Greenwood; Bob Hatzfeld; First, Crystal Springs, James Beasley;

Jan. 28, 9:30 a.m.: Oak Forest, Jackson, Jerry Talley; First, Gulfport, Martha Frances Dugger; First, Horn Lake, George McFadin; First, Greenville, Alice Katherine Turner; Highland, Meridian, Franklin Denham.

For further information, contact Mrs. Pray at the Church Music Department, phone 968-3800.

Youth meet to offer witnessing

The Mississippi Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference Dec. 29-30 at Mississippi College, Clinton, features Christian concerts by Kay DeKalb and Steve Camp, witness training by Lamar Slay, inspirational messages by Peter McLeod, pastor of First Church, Hattiesburg, and congregational music led by Bruce Fields, minister of youth and activities at First Church, Biloxi.

Slay, minister of youth at Castle Hills Church, San Antonio, Tex., will lead participants in an intense, four session seminar on witnessing to one's faith in Jesus Christ.

The program, sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Evangelism Department, begins with registration at 1 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 29 and concludes at 4:15 p.m., Dec. 30. The dates in the 1983 Baptist diary were wrong.

There will be a fee of \$3 per person for materials to be used during sessions.

Total abstinence is easier for me than perfect moderation.—St. Augustine

Four-year-old church reaches out to the world

Central Baptist Church in Brandon, is a mere child—only four years old; and its Woman's Missionary Union is an infant—three months old—but the missions spirit and enthusiasm of this small church is worth noting.

The total membership is around 160, with Sunday School enrollment of a little more than 100. A double-wide trailer houses the church auditorium, and a single-wide trailer serves as educational space. A new building, now under construction, will provide a larger auditorium and additional educational space; but completion is several months away.

Mrs. Dianne Phillips, WMU director, says, "We met Oct. 17 for the organizational meeting of Baptist Women. On Oct. 26, Girls in Action and Mission Friends were organized. On Nov. 23, our Acteens organization was begun."

"The Baptist Men had been organized for several months, but there was no Royal Ambassador organization. A man from a neighboring church spoke at one of the Baptist Men meetings about the need for RA work. Following the meeting, six men volunteered to begin work with RAs. Now, we have missions education for every member of our church."

Central has participated in the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions in past years, but its observance this year with the WMU leading the emphasis is quite different. Last year the church had difficulty reaching its goal of \$200, and finally had to take money from the church treasury to complete the goal. This year the church was within a few dollars of surpassing its goal of \$250 the second Sunday in December.

Each WMU organization has had a part in the emphasis. All age-level organizations observed the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions. The GAs presented a puppet skit on the life of Lottie Moon the second Sunday in December.

GAs and their mothers made refreshments for the girls to sell to church members each Wednesday night in December. Part of the proceeds from the sales will go to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Acteens provided an "in-church post office." Members brought their Christmas cards for other church members, along with 20 cents for each card, to the Acteens "post office." Cards were distributed by the Acteens and proceeds from the "post office"

By Betty Smith
were given to the Lottie Moon Offering.

Central Church also notes the needs in its own community. Ten Baptist Women, along with a "Santa" from the Baptist Men, provided refreshments and Christmas gifts for one of the "lock-up houses" at the Mississippi State Hospital at Whitfield. The cottage houses 47 acutely mentally ill patients.

Mrs. Phillips says, "The party was such a blessing to all of us. I think the patients could feel the love and concern we wanted to share with them."

Baptist Men provided Christmas baskets for several families in Brandon and surrounding communities.

J. T. Pannell has been pastor at

Student actions reflect bold missions attitude

By Gail Rothwell

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—The number of churches, Sunday schools and missions started with the help of students involved in Southern Baptist campus ministry tripled during the past year, according to statistics from the annual Bold Mission Thrust report.

The statistics for the 1982-83 school year, reported by state convention student directors and compiled by national student ministries of the Baptist Sunday School Board, show students were instrumental in starting 96 new churches, Sunday schools, or missions, as compared with 33 new starts in 1981-82.

Statistics reflect an overall increase in mission work with the number of students involved in summer missions and other short-term missions projects rising to 8,919 from 5,386.

In addition, students contributed \$933,782 toward Southern Baptist mission projects.

Last year, of the 158,630 students involved in campus ministry in the United States, 118,368 were also enrolled in Sunday School in a local church. Churches recorded 5,497 student baptisms during the year.

Student participation in Bible study groups on campus continues to rise, increasing from 32,181 in 1981-82 to 35,684 last year.

A category added this year showed more than 10,100 students involved in some type of witness training during the year.

Also, 2,828 churches received some

Central since its beginning. His wife, Pattie, is music director.

Mrs. Phillips says, "I credit Pattie Pannell with helping us organize WMU. She has served as associational Baptist Women director, so she had a lot of know-how and experience to help train us. Central is a missions-minded church, and we are growing spiritually and in missions."

Central Church in Brandon joins other churches in Mississippi and throughout the Southern Baptist Convention in reaching out to the world through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

Betty Smith is secretary in the Mississippi Baptist Woman's Missionary Union office.

type of assistance in developing a ministry to students and 1,448 church workers with student responsibility received training in student ministry. The BMT report indicates student work relies heavily upon volunteer directors and workers.

Of the 20 campuses reporting student work in Colorado, 14 of the directors are either Mission Service Corps personnel or volunteer workers. In North Carolina, 37 of the 46 directors are volunteers, and in Ohio 26 of the 29 positions are either Mission Service Corps or volunteer workers.

(Gail Rothwell writes for the Sunday School Board.)

Tax credits pushed

WASHINGTON (BP)—Despite a recent Senate vote decisively rejecting them, President Reagan has renewed his commitment to push for tuition tax credits in the 98th Congress.

Reagan told 21 Catholic, Jewish, and evangelical supporters of tuition tax credits he will push the Republican-controlled Senate for a new vote as early as next spring. According to one participant in the Dec. 7 meeting, Reagan said it is wrong to say he failed to lobby the Senate hard enough to insure passage of his measure before it was voted down, 59-38, on Nov. 16.

The Southern Baptist Convention and numerous state conventions have gone on record repeatedly in opposition to tuition tax credit legislation.

Schillings serve in Antigua

Mr. and Mrs. H. Glen Schilling, director of missions, Simpson Baptist Association, and his wife, served under appointment from the Foreign Mission Board Nov. 25 - Dec. 3 in Antigua, Windward Islands. Schilling taught a course on church polity under the direction of the Education Extension Department of the Foreign Mission Board. It was a 12-hour course, made available for the members of the three Southern Baptist churches on the island and other interested people.

There was a total enrollment of 61 from 10 churches. Schilling also preached at the Villa Baptist Church both services on Nov. 27. Mrs. Schilling led a literacy workshop each morning. There was a total enrollment of 19 from four denominations. The island of Antigua is 11 miles long and eight miles wide with 75,000 population. The average income is \$600 annually.

The churches and interested people of Simpson Baptist Association paid all expenses for the mission trip.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE CHURCH INSURANCE PROGRAM

The Church Insurance Program is administered by the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and is underwritten by Aetna Life and Casualty.

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- Comprehensive Medical Plan...** provides major medical protection for you and your family at the lowest possible cost.
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You may obtain a brochure and application from your state annuity secretary or the Annuity Board.

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or call our new toll free number 1-800-262-0511

Flexibility, cooperation keys to training growth

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Flexible training approaches, cooperation with denominational agencies, and worldwide distribution of materials were cited by Roy Edgemon as key factors in a three-year resurgence in Southern Baptists' church training enrollment.

After more than a decade of steady enrollment declines, participation in church training showed a dramatic turnaround in 1980 when an enrollment gain was posted for the first time since 1963. The enrollment was 2.7 million.

Enrollment by 1982 had climbed to 1.9 million after a drop to 1.75 million in 1979.

Edgemon, director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department, attributed much of the growth to flexibility made possible by the introduction of the "Survival Kit for New Christians" and adult and youth discipleship training, MasterLife and Disciple Youth.

He said about 1979 the department began moving toward the concept of church training as "not just for Sunday night anymore."

For years the department offered one basic type of training material. Now four approaches are available—ongoing curriculum, Equipping Center Modules for short-term training, doctrinal study materials and survival kits, and MasterLife and Disciple Youth discipleship materials.

"Church leaders began to realize the importance of training and discipling people because most churches had an inadequate base of leaders to draw from," Edgemon said. "We began introducing materials to meet the needs of Southern Baptists."

In addition, he said "leaders began to focus on a generation of Baptists that did not understand the basics of their faith and heritage."

According to Edgemon, the resurgence of training in general is a result of the cooperative spirit that exists between various departments of the Sunday school board and the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards.

"We see ourselves as a broker for the training needs of all Southern Baptists," he said.

Edgemon believes the cooperation that exists between church training

and SBC agencies should be a model for the type of denominational work that can be accomplished in the future. "The success of Bold Mission Thrust lies in our ability to work together to reach the world with the gospel by the year 2000," Edgemon stressed.

An example of inter-agency cooperation occurred in 1981 when the Foreign Mission Board incorporated MasterLife into its orientation process for new missionaries. Since that time more than 1,500 missionaries in 100 countries have been trained to use the materials. MasterLife has been printed in more than 15 languages.

Edgemon said the supporting efforts of the Sunday School Board's church administration, church music, and Sunday School departments contributed greatly to the record success of Dynamic Doctrines, a 13-week fall study.

For the quarter, more than one million pieces of ongoing curriculum containing the materials was sold. This was the first time in more than 10 years that sales of ongoing materials reached one million.

The biggest success in terms of sales has been the survival kits for adults, youths, and children. Edgemon said

since 1979 nearly 1.5 million copies have been distributed worldwide. Kits are currently in more than 20 languages.

The future of church training holds excitement and promise, according to Edgemon. He said the department will continue to use the four general areas of materials, periodically adding, revising, and deleting materials to meet the needs of Southern Baptists.

Scheduled for future release are Survival Kit II: The Journey Continues, a study on developing Christian values; MasterBuilder, a continuation of MasterLife; and Disciple Youth II.

Both Disciple Youth courses are joint ventures of the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board and the youth section of the church training department.

In addition to these products, plans are under way to introduce leadership courses on topics such as evangelism, stewardship, and servanthood.

"All of our materials are Bible-based, person-centered, practical and sequential," Edgemon noted. "And from the response we are getting, this is what people want."

(Gail Rothwell writes for the Sunday School Board.)

African prince to return in role of a servant

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (BP)—As an infant, Prince Joshua Dara was abandoned by his family to die. Now he plans to return as their servant.

His father is king of the Ilorin province in Nigeria, but when Dara and his sister were born the community worship of the goddess of the river demanded the abandonment of twins.

Baptist missionary T. B. Hall took the children in and raised them as his own. Dara learned to work hard and to study the scriptures Hall lived by. It wasn't until he was 15 Dara realized he was black and his "father" was not. The missionary never mentioned it.

He graduated last June with a degree in communications and is presently finishing a music degree at Cal Baptist while studying law at Western

State University in Fullerton.

Dara memorized the Sermon on the Mount in seven African dialects and accepts an average of four speaking engagements a month. He also writes a weekly column on African internal affairs for the "Townsend Enterprise" newspaper of San Bernardino and directs the music program at the New Covenant Baptist Church of Cerritos.

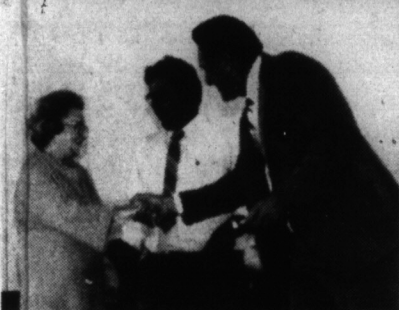
The Nigerians thought they had lost a child to the goddess of the river or, at best, provided a slave to T. B. Hall. They never expected Dara to return.

"Some of them doubt if I'll return, as if I'm gone forever," Dara admitted, "but I certainly plan to return. I want to become a leader in the national government of Nigeria."

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Names In The News...



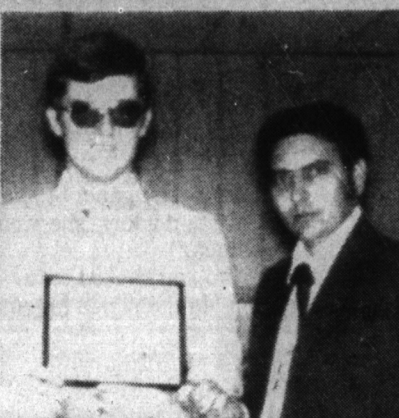
MRS. HESTER DEERING (called by many at her church "The General") recently received a pin for 22 years of perfect attendance at Sunday School at Griffin Street Church, Moss Point. She received the pin from the Sunday School director, Sam Jones, center. Athens McNeil, pastor, right, is congratulating her for faithfulness and steadfastness.

Goss dedicates family center

Goss Church, Columbia, dedicated its family life center on Oct. 23. This multi-purpose building began as an idea several years ago while Jerry W. Mixon, presently pastor of the First, Winona, was pastor. Construction of this 125 x 75 foot building began in May, 1982.

This facility includes a regulation basketball court, grandstands, weight room, ceramics room, two dressing rooms, game area, family room (reception area), modern buffet-style kitchen, office, and four restrooms. The estimated cost of construction and furnishings is \$175,000. Due to various financial contributions before the campaign and the Family Life Center fund raising campaign itself, the church dedicated the facility debt free and one and half years early. The project date of completion had been April, 1983. The Family Life Center director was Dudley Williamson and Gordon Fortenberry served as Steering Committee chairman.

"The Beyond Ourselves Family Life Center Campaign was the key element in this successful building project for the church. The completion and continued use of this facility could have never been possible without dedicated pastoral and lay leadership, much sacrifice physically and financially, and the acceptance of a challenge to go 'Beyond Ourselves,'" states present pastor Matt Buckles.



GRACE CHAPEL CHURCH, MONROE COUNTY, has licensed Bobby Wilbanks, left, to the gospel ministry. Bobby is married and has one daughter. He is available for supply preaching (phone 369-9490). The church has also licensed Jason Sanders (insert) to the gospel ministry. He is single and has studied one semester at Blue Mountain College. He is available for supply (phone 256-7782). Larry Harrison, at right above, interim pastor, presented the certificates of license.



Sanders

BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)—Charles L. Chaney, vice president for academic affairs, has been elected president of Southwest Baptist University, effective immediately. He succeeds Harlan Spurgeon, who resigned in June to become vice president for human resources at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Chaney, a native of Texas, came to SBU in February of 1981 as dean of the Redford School of Theology and Church Vocations. Prior to accepting the SBU position, Chaney was director of the division of church extension with the Illinois Baptist State Association. He received a BA degree from Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Tex., the BD and ThM degrees from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and the MA and PhD degrees from the University of Chicago. He has been pastor of churches in Texas, Kentucky and Illinois.

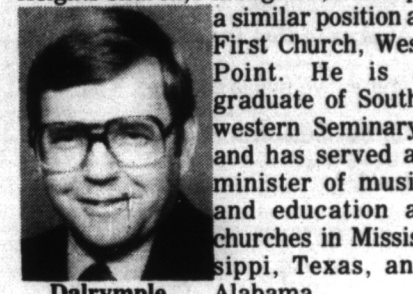
Mickey Holliman, Allan Kent, Billy Joe Pierce, and Dan Sarraff will be ordained as deacons at the Harrisburg Church, Tupelo, on Jan. 8, at 7 p.m. during a special worship service. Larry W. Fields is pastor.

A day of worry is more exhausting than a week of work.—John Lubbock.

Staff Changes

Providence Church, Cleveland, has called Ashbury Martin Jr. as pastor. Martin is a graduate of Blue Mountain College, attended Southeastern Seminary for a year, and will be graduated from Mid-America Seminary in May, 1984. He has served as pastor of churches in Mississippi while attending seminary. He and his wife, Jeanette, and son, Justin, will be on the field at Providence Jan. 8.

Jim Dalrymple has resigned as minister of education at Arlington Heights Church, Pascagoula, to accept a similar position at First Church, West Point. He is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary, and has served as minister of music and education at churches in Mississippi, Texas, and Alabama.



Billy Sims has been called as pastor of Highland Chapel Church, Gulf Coast. He and his wife, Nancy, are natives of Tennessee.

Brenda Plaise is the new education secretary at First Church, Lyman.

Mississippi's music promo "best in SBC"

NASHVILLE—Mississippi Southern Baptists received an award from the church music department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board recently.

Dan Hall, music secretary for Mississippi, accepted the award on behalf of the state's Baptists for the best promotion of music events among state conventions.

The recognition came during annual December meetings for state convention program leaders.



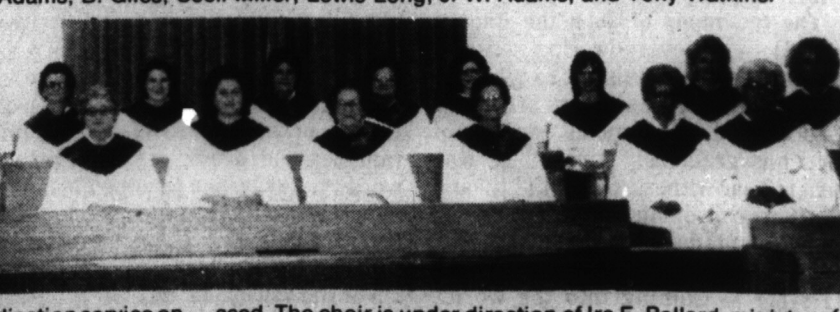
YOUTH OF EAST PHILADELPHIA CHURCH had a "Treasure Hunt" on Nov. 23. The winner was Aletha Scarborough, right. She is standing with her prize which was awarded her by Carrie Barnett and Allen McDaniel, representatives for the youth. The prize was a 12-pound butterball turkey for Thanksgiving.



CENTRAL CHURCH, GOLDEN, (Tishomingo) observed "Senior Adult Day" Oct. 30. Only persons past 60 were allowed to sing in the choir (pictured). Lunch was served in honor of senior adults. Ralph Culp is pastor.



FIRST CHURCH, SHARON, held a note burning service Nov. 6, signifying that the education building completed in 1968 is paid for. Pictured are those who were trustees when the note was made. Burning the note were, left to right, Randolph Adams, B. Giles, Cecil Miller, Lewis Long, J. W. Adams, and Tony Watkins.



EAST PHILADELPHIA CHURCH held a dedication service on Nov. 20, on behalf of new choir robes the church had purchased. The choir is under direction of Ira E. Pollard, minister of music and youth, seated at far left.

Just for the Record



A PUPPET AND EVANGELISM TEAM, members of the Baptist Student Union at Jones County Junior College, held a workshop for the puppeteers of New Hope Church, Greene County, at Leakesville. Mrs. Thelda Adams, wife of the pastor, Shelly Adams, is developing a puppet ministry for the church. John Sumner, Jones County BSU director, introduced the team, who also took charge of the evening service. Kirk Hinton led the music. Sonya Lee and Kim McCarty presented special music. Denise Lee and Dawn Satterwhite gave testimonies. Kelly Elmore played the piano. John Stroud delivered the message.



WAYNE MCKENZIE, Brotherhood director of First Church, Hazlehurst, and five other adults took 29 Royal Ambassadors and GAs to the Baptist Building in Jackson to bring back boxes of personal health kits to be used in disaster relief.



TOCOWA CHURCH, PANOLA COUNTY, on Nov. 20 honored four couples in its congregation who have been married more than 50 years each. The honorees were, left to right, Mr. and Mrs. Martin Joiner, 63 years; Mr. and Mrs. Bobo Faulkner, 53 years; Mr. and Mrs. Clarion Gee, 60 years; and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Onkst, 55 years. The couples were treated to a covered



BELLEHAVEN CHURCH, JACKSON COUNTY, participated in a note burning service on Nov. 20, signifying that the educational portion of the church is debt free. Left to right: Roy J. Wood, pastor; Jerry Tapp and Jon Sharp (whose names were on the note), deacons. The church property is valued at \$765,000.00 and in April 1984 will be totally debt free. Planning is already in effect to renovate the present sanctuary during early 1984.



Calvary, Corinth, recently ordained two new deacons. They are Troy Hardin and Bill Nelson.

Arlington Church, Lincoln County, has ordained Leroy Burnett and Holton Lofton as deacons.

Gary Aultman was recently ordained a deacon at Tate Street Church, Corinth.

Afterward, they repeated their wedding vows in a joint ceremony conducted by Jimmy Anthony, pastor. They walked to the altar to the strains of the Wedding March. Then in the reception hall, they cut a multi-tiered wedding cake. (Photo courtesy THE PANOLIAN, Batesville.)

SCRAPBOOK

Christmas

Oh, Father grant to us
the beautiful season of
Christmas with great joy
and happiness, as our
precious Jesus becomes
a welcome guest, within
each heart and home. Help
us to understand and love
this blessed time, as a Holy
season for thy Son . . . and
Father, help us to see the
illumination of that all —
glorious Star, that shed
its light on that wondrous
night so long ago. Help us
to rejoice as we relive
the beautiful age-old story
of good tidings of great joy . . .
and let there be, Father, peace
and joy to the world . . . as
our hearts feel the beauty and
wonder of that first Silent Night;
and as we pause to thank You
for our beautiful Saviour and
Lord.

—Roxie Barton Jones
Steens

You may say

You may say:
"If I had been to a neighbor to Mary
A chariot, not a donkey, she would
have ridden."
But what have you shared today
With the neighbor who has fallen by
the way?

You may say:
"If I had been the innkeeper
No stall would have been where he
lay."
But what of your own comfortable
home
For hospitality to God's servants is it
known?

You may say:
"If I had been Herod the king,
No children would have been slain."
But what of the millions of babes
Who die daily because we give no
aid?

You may say:
"If I had been one of the Wise Men,
More than one, or three, gifts I would
have given."
But what of your gifts today to our
King?
Are they paltry, half-given, or be-
moaned?

You may say:
"If I had been in that time
The first Christmas would have been
sublime."
But what of this Christmas today?
Can you say, "It's Christ's birthday,
not mine?"

—Alyne Simmons
Decatur

Faith is the expectancy of spring in
the midst of a cold winter.—(Sharon
Lee Roberts)

There'll always be a Christmas

There'll always be a Christmas
as long as there is love,
As long as we commemorate
The Christ Child from above.
As long as there are gifts to give
And sparkling Christmas lights,
Mistletoe and holly,
And starry winter nights.

—Ruth Norsworthy Crager, State Line

As long as the story is told
Of the Christ Child's humble birth,
As long as we sing "Silent Night,"
And pray for peace on earth.
There'll always be a Christmas
No matter what we say or do
To celebrate our Saviour's birth,
God's gift to me and you.

The widow's mite

Sometimes our gift to God seems
small,
It's only the widow's mite.
But when it's taken and blessed by him
It becomes a powerful light.

The Bibles it sends, the food it buys
For other unfortunate men
Who without our help would have no
hope
To ever break the shackles of sin.

Perhaps that mite if it's willingly given
Will help one who has answered the
call,
Help him to study and preach the word
As he ministers to the needs of all.

That extra mite on some mission field,
Will light the way for some soul
Who has walked in dark shadows and
now has the chance,
Of walking in God's own fold.

Let's share that others will have God's
word,
Let's give that others may go
Whatever we have to be used of our
Lord
Because we love him so.

—Janice Mosley
Shubuta

Merry Christmas!

To the staff of Baptist Record
Merry Christmas, one and all
May loving thoughts of Bethlehem
Bring to mind a vacant stall.

Where baby Jesus quietly lay
From the moment of his birth
Cradled in a lowly manger
Son of God, born on earth.

Shepherds flocking from the hills
Wise men coming from afar
Bringing forth their greatest gifts
Guided by a special star.

May you have the greatest joy
As the angels did that night
Sounding forth the glorious news
Of the birth of Jesus Christ.

May your happiness and peace
Be related to that birth
For it is through Christmas Day
God in person came to earth!

—Alma Lee Isbell, Amory

Love

Lo, the bright star
Over Judean hills
It shines—
A king-star that thrills
Like none before—
A king that wills
Like none before—
Come with us,
Mighty and meek;
Kneel with us,
Oppressed and weak;
In the star light
In the soft night
Bow down to earth
At Love's lowly birth.

—Vivian B. Norris
Marks

Christmas: Because he came

Christmas is not just
a red letter date
on the calendar.
It is not just
another seasonal holiday
with trees shimmering tinsel,
a poinsettias' crimson, spicy fruit
cakes
Santa's visit, children's wide-eyed
wonder,
homecomings, candle's glow, mis-
tletoe,
packages foil wrapped.

It is the joyous celebration
of an incredible event
that set the heavenly choir
to singing;
a time when an angel
told startled shepherds
of the Christ Child
born in a Bethlehem stall
to Mary and Joseph.
That night the great star
blazed white-fire,
guided the sleepy herdsmen
to the bare stable
where they found the Holy Babe,
worshipped him.

Christmas didn't just happen;
God planned it, the birth of Jesus,
as his Love-gift
to a waiting world.

—Eunice Barnes
Pascagoula

Love gives itself; it is not bought.

Southwestern fills posts, establishes Prayer Chair

FORT WORTH, Tex. (BP)—
Trustees of Southwestern Seminary
elected Davis L. Cooper, pastor of the
University Hills Baptist Church,
Denver, Colo., as board chairman and
filled two vice presidential posts dur-
ing their annual meeting on campus.

W. J. Smith of Charlotte, N. C., was
elected vice chairman, and John P.
McNaughton of Fort Worth, was
reelected secretary.

The trustees also elected registrar
Jeter Basden and business manager
Hubert Martin as vice presidents; es-
tablished a Chair of Prayer and
Spiritual Formation; added a finan-
cial consultant to the president; ap-
proved sabbatical study leave for cer-
tain officers and administrators;
added two degree plans and approved
17 course additions.

L. Jack Gray, professor of missions
since 1956, was named the first occu-
pant of the new Chair of Prayer and
Spiritual Formation. It combines the
19 current courses offered at South-
western with another dozen on spiritu-
ality, prayer, and worship in the Bible
being planned.

Basden will fill the newly created
position of vice president for planning
and research Nov. 1. The position re-
places that of executive vice president
which had been occupied by Lloyd El-
der, president-elect of the Southern

Baptist Sunday School Board. Basden
has been director of admissions and
registrar since February 1981.

Martin, business manager since
1980, will succeed Wayne Evans as
vice president for business affairs.
Evans announced his retirement as of
Jan. 31, 1984.

Evans will assume a consultant role
as financial advisor to the president
beginning Feb. 1, 1984. In his new role
he will provide financial and invest-
ment data and counsel to the president
and work with the Southwestern Bapt-
ist Seminary Development Founda-
tion, Inc., in property acquisitions to
complete the campus master plan.

The two degree plans added are the
master of arts in church social ser-
vices and the master of arts/master of
science in social work.

The MA/MSSW degree will be an in-
tegrated plan with the University of
Texas at Arlington. A student will be
enrolled in both schools and will
graduate from both schools upon com-
pletion of 82 required course hours.
The MA/CSS will require 66 course
hours for graduation.

Course additions include one in the
school of theology and 16 in the school
of religious education, including six in
the department of communications,
seven in behavioral sciences, and
three in church social services.

Devotional

Herod never found Jesus

By David E. Hall, pastor, First, West Point

The second chapter of Matthew records two separate endeavors to find Jesus.
One endeavor, that of the Magi, was successful. The other endeavor, that of
Herod, was not. Herod's place in the birth narrative is the tragic tale of a man
who sought for Jesus but never found him.

Matthew's description of Herod gives us some important
insight into the personality and peril of this earthly king who
could not cope with the emotional and political implications
generated in his mind by the birth of Jesus. Matthew presents
Herod as a disturbed man (2:3); a dishonest man (2:8); a
desperate man (2:16); and finally as a defeated man (2:19-20).
Herod was all the things from which Jesus came into the world
to deliver humanity, but even though he searched diligently
for Jesus, Herod never found him.

The Magi found Jesus because their desire was to give to
him their worship, their adoration, and their gifts. The Magi found Jesus because
they were willing to accept him as the king he was revealed to them to be. Herod's
attitude was just the opposite. His only interest in Jesus was selfish. Herod
wanted to find Jesus only for the sake of preserving and perpetuating his own
kingdom. This was the reason why Herod never found Jesus!

All of us need to find Jesus, and we can find him if we are willing to accept him
as the Savior, Lord, and king God has revealed him to be. But Jesus will not be
dominated by us or manipulated to preserve and perpetuate our own little king-
doms! The wise men of the world, not the Herods, are the ones who search for
Jesus and find him, for only the wise man searches for God's anointed to worship
him as king of kings and lord of lords.

Moses said, "You will seek the Lord your God, and you will find him if you
search for him with all your heart and all your soul" (Deut. 4:29). This is the kind
of seeker who always finds. This is the man who is truly wise.

Bible Book

The Word made flesh

By Harry L. Lucenay, Temple, Hattiesburg
John 1:1-18

The prologue of John's gospel is con-
sidered by some commentators to be
the queen of literature. Tennyson
wrote, "It is the highest adventure of
religious thought attained by the mind
of man." Lenski determines the
natural division of the prologue to be:
(1) The eternal Word, the creator of
all, is the light and life shining into the
sinful world (vv. 1-5); (2) The Word
came into the sinful world, awakening
faith and arousing unbelief (vv. 6-12);
(3) The Word became flesh in the
world and brought us grace and truth
from the Father (vv. 13-18). These
three divisions build a natural
pyramid of faith. Although our lesson
follows a different outline, the struc-
ture of the passage reveals the same
truth.

Identity and characteristics of the Word (1:1-5) — The Word may be
viewed as divine power, as a national
principle, or as a redemptive procla-
mation, according to Hull. The Jew
may understand the prologue as a
Christian claim that its Lord is the
agent of God's creative power, the ful-
fillment of the Old Testament Torah,
the embodiment of divine wisdom. A
Greek could just as easily assume that
he was being asked to believe in Jesus
as the manifestation of unchanging
truth, the perfect pattern of ultimate
reality, the pointer to the meaning of
the universe. To a Christian this pas-
sage clarified the essential content of
the Christian message (which was the
life, death, and resurrection of the in-
carnate Christ rather than certain doc-
trinal propositions, mystical experi-
ences, or ethical admonitions. The
Word as power, principle, and procla-
mation was fulfilled in the Word as
person.

The Word existed prior to creation,
thus thought preceded act. However,
the Word is forever constant and un-
conditional by historical contingency
(Hebrews 13:8). The Word is identified
with divine order and was the agent in
calling forth the totality of created or-
der. Therefore, meaning is prior to
matter so things derive their impor-
tance from the spiritual purposes for
which they are intended.

The testimony of John the Baptist (1:6-8) — An overpowering sense of
purpose pervades this entire passage.
A man came to be; he was sent from
God, even his name meant "one whom
God has graciously given;" he was
sent to bear witness to the "light," and
the purpose of his ministry was to
bring men to belief in the light.

The rejection of Jesus as the Word (1:9-11) — Coming into the world,

His gift to those who received him
(1:12-13) — However, individual Jews
and individual Gentiles received
Christ as Savior. They were given the
privilege of becoming the "children of
God" through faith in Christ Jesus.
The most characteristic thing about a
child is that his life is still before him;
the best is yet to be. The child of God
has a right to everything that is his
father's. He is his father's image. He
has his father's assets, name, home,
and inheritance.

The reality of the incarnation (1:14-18) — "And the Word became flesh and
dwelt among us." The simplicity of
that affirmation conveys the profound-
ity of the entire redemptive work of
God (Summers). The Word that al-
ways "was" in his eternal being with
God (v. 1), now became a temporal
event at a point in history limited to a
moment of time. The Word that "was
God" now came into being "as flesh to
dwell with men." This Son is the only
one of his kind. He was filled with the
desire to give men more than they de-
serve through his boundless generos-
ity. His life was marked by an absolute
consistency between what men heard
him say and what they saw him do.

Verse 17 presents the contrast be-
tween Moses and Jesus. The difference
lay not in the character of God as
giver, but in the potentialities of the
gift to make him known. Hall writes,
"A living person full of the divine real-
ity is a more adequate medium of re-
velation than commandments written on
tables of stone." Summers sum-
marizes the prologue: the eternal
word (v. 1) who has become the incar-
nate word (v. 14) is identified as the
Son of God (v. 18) who next appears as
"the lamb of God, who takes away the
sin of the world" (v. 29).

Uniform

Reign of righteousness

By Clarence H. Cutrell
Isaiah 9:1-7; 10:33-11:10

Leon Bramlett was probably correct
when he said, by way of summarizing
the reasons for his loss in the race for
the office of Governor of Mississippi,
"The people did not want change." Most
of us are reluctant to make changes in
our life style. But when Jesus Christ,
whose birthday we observe next Sunday,
returns to this earth, he will usher in a
great new kingdom. It will be a reign
of righteousness.

Usually, we relate Christmas to
"peace on earth, good will toward
men." But the emphasis in this Sunday
School lesson is "righteousness." Surely
the world is weary with war and
developing a penchant for peace.
However, the desire for peace is not
necessarily matched by the desire for
righteousness! But both will come
when Jesus comes. "You can't have
one without the other." What will be
the characteristics of this reign of
righteousness?

1. The Saviour and the saved (Isa. 9:2-7). For the rebellious, disobedient,
covenant-breaking people of God to
enter upon a reign of righteousness,
nothing less than the coming of "Mes-
siah," the promised redeemer, the one
whom we know as Saviour, could pos-
sibly suffice. But there must also be a
saved, redeemed people, make right-
eous not by the works of the law but by
the gracious acts of God himself, ac-
cepted by faith.

Note the changes in the lives of the
people wrought by the coming of the
one who is called "Child" and "Son" to
the throne. These two titles could be
prophetic of the humanity and deity of
the promised Messiah. These are some
of the changes which we will see.
Darkness will be changed to light, bril-
liant light which the darkness cannot
comprehend nor overcome. New in-
sights of God's will and purpose will
replace the old fears, doubts and sins
of the past. The people will learn that
living in righteousness is not full of
gloom, distress, depression and woe,
but of an unspeakable joy, peace and
gladness. It does not consist of defeat,
oppression, loss of self-esteem, but of
victory, triumph, deliverance, self-
fulfillment in the highest sense. There
will be a complete disarmament of the
nations and true peace will reign. "The
fruit of righteousness will be peace;
the effect of righteousness will be
quietness and confidence forever" (Isa. 32:17).

All of this will be accomplished by
the zeal of the Lord of hosts. George
Adam Smith in *The Expositor's Bible*

says, "The zeal is that overflow of the
love which cannot keep still, which . . .
visits (men) in their distress, and car-
ries them forward into unconceived
dispensations of grace and glory."

2. The Spirit of God and the spirit (little 's') of the saved (Isa. 11:1-3a). For
there to be a reign of righteousness
"from henceforth even for ever," it is
essential that each member of the
kingdom shall be motivated, in-
structed, empowered, and made lov-
ing and compassionate by the same in-
dwelling Spirit who, we are told, rested
upon this one who was out of the stem
of Jesse and therefore of the Davidic
line. That Spirit is named the Spirit of
the Lord, the Holy Spirit, and is prom-
ised and is given to every one who be-
lieves.

The gifts of the Spirit as named here
are in three pairs. Each pair was given
as a means to enable the King to ac-
complish his purposes. Each pair of
gifts was also referred to as "the spirit
of," spelled with a little 's' instead of
the capital 'S' of the Holy Spirit. Today
the greatest gift for Christmas anyone
could receive would be the indwelling
Holy Spirit from the Lord, who in turn
would enable that recipient to live a
life of righteousness and thus mirror to
the world the clear image of his
Heavenly Father.

Among the gifts which you will dis-
tribute this Christmas season, why not
include a testimony of the love of God
in Christ Jesus to some lost friend, or
deeds or words of kindness and caring
ministry to some lonely, neglected,
needy Christian brother.

3. The Son, the Spirit, and the service of the saved (Isa. 11:3b-10). All of
the remarkable deeds spoken of here as
being accomplished by the "Branch
(which) shall grow out of (the) roots of
Jesse" are the earthly, outward, prac-
tical manifestations of the reign of
righteousness culminating in the tam-
ing of wild beasts and a beneficent
change in the attitude of man toward
the sanctity of all forms of life. But if
any measure or degree of this blessed
reign is to be realized in our day it will
be through the continuing work of the
Christ in the power of the Spirit and
through the lives of redeemed indi-
viduals. Note similarities between this
passage and the armor of God in Eph.
6:10ff. The worldwide reach of the
Kingdom will be attained when we
take seriously the command of our
Christ to "go into all the world and
preach the gospel to every creature."
(Merry Christmas).

Life and Work

Birth of a son

By Larry W. Fields, Harrisburg, Tupelo
Isaiah 11:1-4a; Matthew 1:1; Luke 1:68-75

Christmas Day commemorates the
birth of Jesus Christ as the most im-
portant event in the history of man-
kind. Even though his humble birth
was unnoticed by most at the time,
today thousands gather from around
the world in Bethlehem to worship at
the Church of the Nativity and millions
all over the world will thank God for
the salvation offered through the gift of
his Son. The first advent of this
divine-human king from the line of
David would signal defeat over sin, Sa-
tan, and death by his life, death, and
resurrection. In one bold initiative by
God, sinful humanity was rescued from
spiritual and eternal death.

**1. The proclamation of the future Mes-
siah (Isaiah 11:1-4a)**

With confidence and certainty,
Isaiah, being inspired by God, pro-
claims the coming of the Messiah. He
presents in a passage of poetic beauty
and power, a moving picture of what
the kingdom will be like.

He knows that the present order has
declined. Despite reforms by Hezekiah
and Josiah, Judah was moving toward
idolatry and, eventually, bondage to
Babylon. But beyond the present con-
ditions, Isaiah could see a shoot or
sprig growing out of the stump of
Jesse. A new king would come out of
David's royal line. This shoot would
grow, prosper, and produce bountiful
fruit. He could see into the future, and
he knew that from the remnant that
would return to Israel after bondage,
the Messiah would come forth at God's
appointed time.

He described the coming king in ver-
ses 2-4. The king would be empowered
by the Holy Spirit and would do many
wonderful works. He would ac-
complish his mission in the power of
the Spirit. He would have a spirit of
wisdom and understanding, which
would allow him to judge properly,
fairly, and perfectly. He would not be
swayed by mere appearance or rumor,
but he would get to the truth of the mat-
ter. There would be no errors in his
reign.

2. The reality of the incarnation (Matthew 1:1)

Jesus Christ was born as the mes-
sianic king, who, by his coming, fulfilled
the covenants with Abraham and
David. He would be the deliverer and
savior, the promised one.

The Jews placed much emphasis on
genealogies; therefore, Matthew
traced Jesse's ancestry back to
Abraham through the lineage of
David. Quite often during his earthly
ministry, he was referred to as the Son

of David. When they saw his power and
experienced his love and justice, it
reminded them of the qualities of their
beloved King David. Those who came
to know him and love him knew that
the prophecy had been fulfilled.

**3. The description of the redeeming
Messiah (Luke 1:68-75)**

These words represent the first spo-
ken words by the priest, Zacharias,
father of John the Baptist, after the
birth of his son. Luke used this song of
praise and blessing to introduce the
mission of Jesus and John. Zacharias
was able to reveal these words at the
impulse of the Holy Spirit.

He is so certain of the redeeming
work of the Lord that he speaks as if it
has already happened (v. 68). God has
looked out for his people and delivered
them from the bondage of sin. The
term horn (v. 69) denotes strength with
the idea that an animal's strength is
demonstrated in its horns. The Mes-
siah would be God's instrument of
power to bring salvation. (See Romans
1:16)

This would fulfill prophecy from
past times. God would do what he said
he would do. He would protect Israel
and lead her to victory over her
enemies. This idea reflects the concept
prevalent in that day which viewed the
Messiah as a political-military leader.
Because Jesus was later to refuse this
role and choose instead the path of
"the suffering servant," the Jews
would reject him. He would establish a
spiritual kingdom based on love, not a
political kingdom based on military
might.

It is understandable that Zacharias
and other contemporaries would think
in nationalistic terms since they had
been under foreign domination for the
greater part of six centuries. Jesus
would not be understood in his true
light until Pentecost. It was then that it
was fully comprehended that his mis-
sion was a spiritual one and included
lost men everywhere.

After reviewing the prophet's words
about the coming Messiah, and after
having viewed Zacharias' hymn of
praise, we should react with joy and
thanksgiving concerning God's won-
derful gift of his son. "Alleluia: for the
Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Re-
velation 19:6).

Some men like to climb mountains
because up there they can't hear the
repetitious claims of those who insist
that "it can't be done!"